

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 CPR-01

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R 230900Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6176

INFO AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 0563

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, PFOR, MT, US, JM

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF ANNOYED AT LACK OF USG
RECEPTION DURING NEW YORK TRANSIT

1. PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF'S SECREARY, JOE CAMILLERI, TOLD AMBASSADOR MAY 22 THAT MINTOFF HAD BEEN ANNOYED DURING BRIEF TRANSIT STOP IN NEW YORK ON MAY 8 AT FACT THERE WAS NO OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE FROM USG TO GREET HIM. AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED ASTONISHMENT AT NEWS OF US TRANSIT, REMINDING CAMILLERI THAT WHEN PM'S PARTY DEPARTED MALTA FOR JAMAICA, NO TRANSIT OF US WAS CONTEMPLATED IN EITHER DIRECTION. CAMILLERI AGREED, BUT EXPLAINED THAT MINTOFF HAD AT LAST MINTUE CHANGED HIS MIND AND HAD HIS STAFF WORK OUT IN JAMAICA A FASTER RETURN TRIP TO MALTA. THIS NECESSITATED A PAN AM FLIGHT TO NEW YORK AND A TWO-HOUR TRANSIT LAYOVER IN MID AFTERNOON OF MAY 8. CAMILLERI ADDED THAT PAN AM'S HANDLING OF PARTY HAD BEEN "EXCELLENT" AND THAT THEY HAD BEEN ACCOMMODATED IN VIP LOUNGE IN NEW YORK. DESPITE THIS, HE FELT THAT AMBASSADOR SHOULD KNOW THAT MINTOFF WAS SOMEWHAT ANNOYED BY FACT THAT NO ONE FROM USG WAS ON HAND TO GREET HIM IN NEW YORK

2. AMBASSADOR CHIDED CAMILLERI GENTLY FOR FAILURE TO
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KEEP EMBASSY INFORMED OF MINTOFF'S PLANS, POINTING OUT

THAT HAD WE HAD ANY INKLING WHATEVER OF SUCH A TRANSIT STOP IN NEW YORK, APPROPRIATE COURTESIES WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN ARRANGED. CAMILLERI SAID MINTOFF "DID NOT BLAME EMBASSY" BUT FELT EMBASSY IN KINGSTON SHOULD HAVE NOTIFIED APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES IN US. AMBASSADOR ASKED IF KINGSTON HAD BEEN ASKED TO DO SO. CAMILLERI WAS NOT CERTAIN BUT FELT EMBASSY KINGSTON SHOULD HAVE DONE THE NECESSARY SINCE IT ISSUED VISAS TO SEVERAL MEMBERS OF MINTOFF'S PARTY AND THEREFORE ".7 5 HAVE KNOWN" MINTOFF'S TRAVEL PLANS. AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED WHY THIS NOT NECESSARILY SO, UNLESS SPECIFIC REQUEST FOR COURTESIES WAS MADE.

3. AMBASSADOR INDICATED THAT WHILE HE REGRETTED ANY DISCOMFITURE ON THE PART OF MINTOFF AT LACK OF OFFICIAL RECEPTION, HE WAS CERTAIN THAT NO SLIGHT HAD BEEN INTENDED AND THAT IT HAD RESULTED SIMPLY FROM LAST MINUTE CHANGE OF TRAVEL PLANS. HE ALSO REMINDED CAMILLERI THAT ON ANY FUTURE TRIPS SUCH INCIDENTS COULD MOST EASILY BE AVOIDED BY NOTIFYING EMBASSY OF SPECIFIC PLANS AND ITINERARY.

4. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THIS INCIDENT PROBABLY RESULTED FROM FAILURE OF MINTOFF'S STAFF IN JAMAICA TO NOTIFY EMBASSY KINGSTON OF PARTY'S SPECIFIC TRAVEL PLANS. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT SOME OF MINTOFF'S ANNOYANCE STEMS MORE FUNDAMENTALLY FROM PROMINENT PRESS COVERAGE HERE OF VISITS TO WASHINGTON BY PRIME MINISTERS OF SEVERAL COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES FOLLOWING JAMAICA CONFERENCE. MINTOFF WOULD HAVE LIKED TO JOIN THEM.SMITH

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